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Effect and complications

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Percutaneous caecal decompression in the horse: Effect and complications

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Background & Objectives

- The effect and safety of percutaneous caecal decompression is debatable, as no comprehensive studies have been published so far.
- Objectives of the present study were to investigate effect and complications of percutaneous caecal decompression.

Conclusions

- Percutaneous caecal decompression is effective in reducing pain and improving normal rectal findings in horses with caecal tympany.
- Short-term complications such as fever were observed but were not life threatening.

Results

- One or several percutaneous caecal decompressions were performed in 147 of 1422 (10.3%) horses referred to a University hospital for colic. Two of the 147 horses were excluded from the study due to missing data.
- Complications observed are shown in table 1.
- Multiple caecal decompressions were not associated with increased risk of complications or euthanasia ($p=0.6$).
- Following caecal decompression, a significant decrease in heart-rate (fig.1), respiratory rate (fig.2), severity of colic signs (fig.3) and use of strong analgesics ($p=0.004$) were observed as were an increase in number of horses with normal rectal findings ($p<0.0001$).

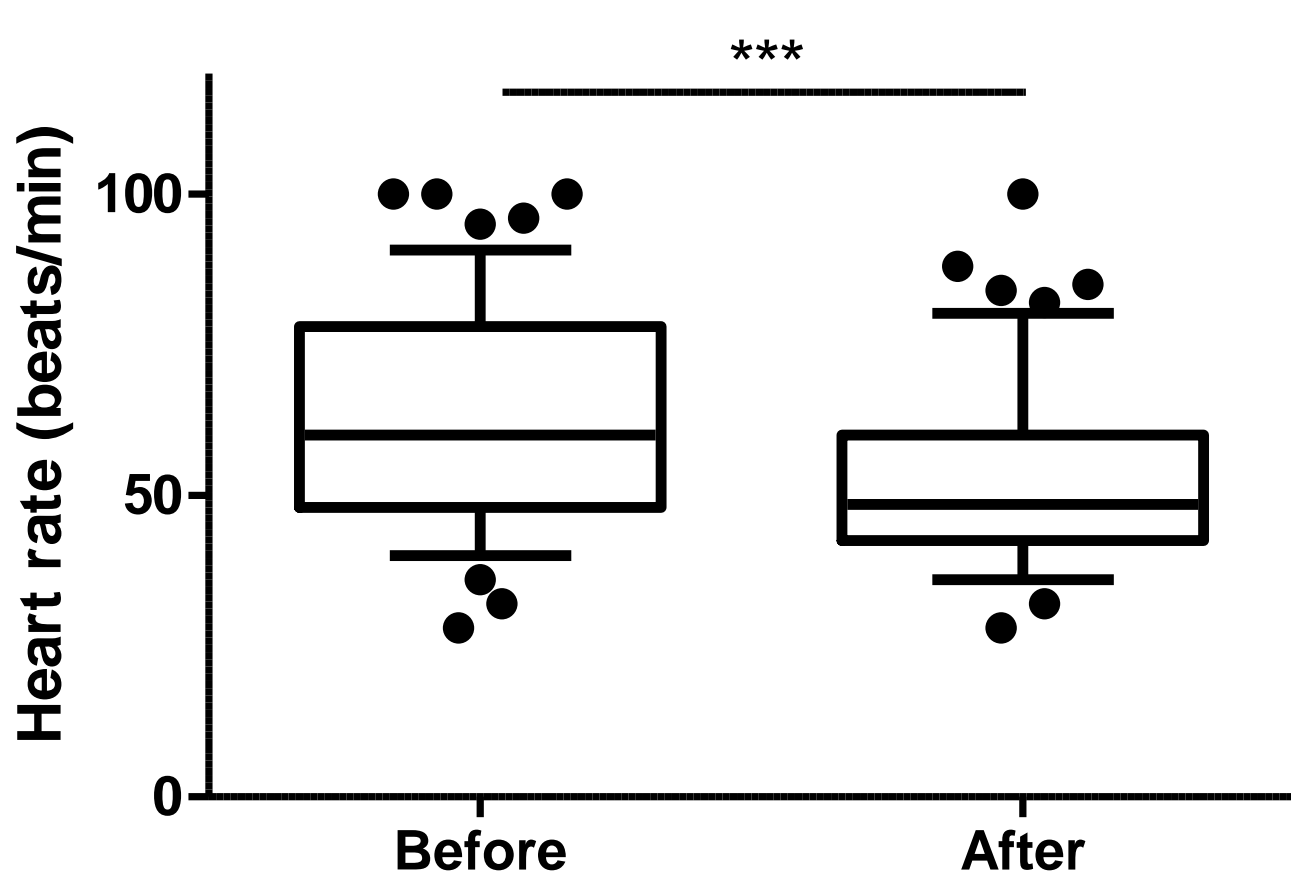


Figure 1. Heart rate before and after caecal decompression

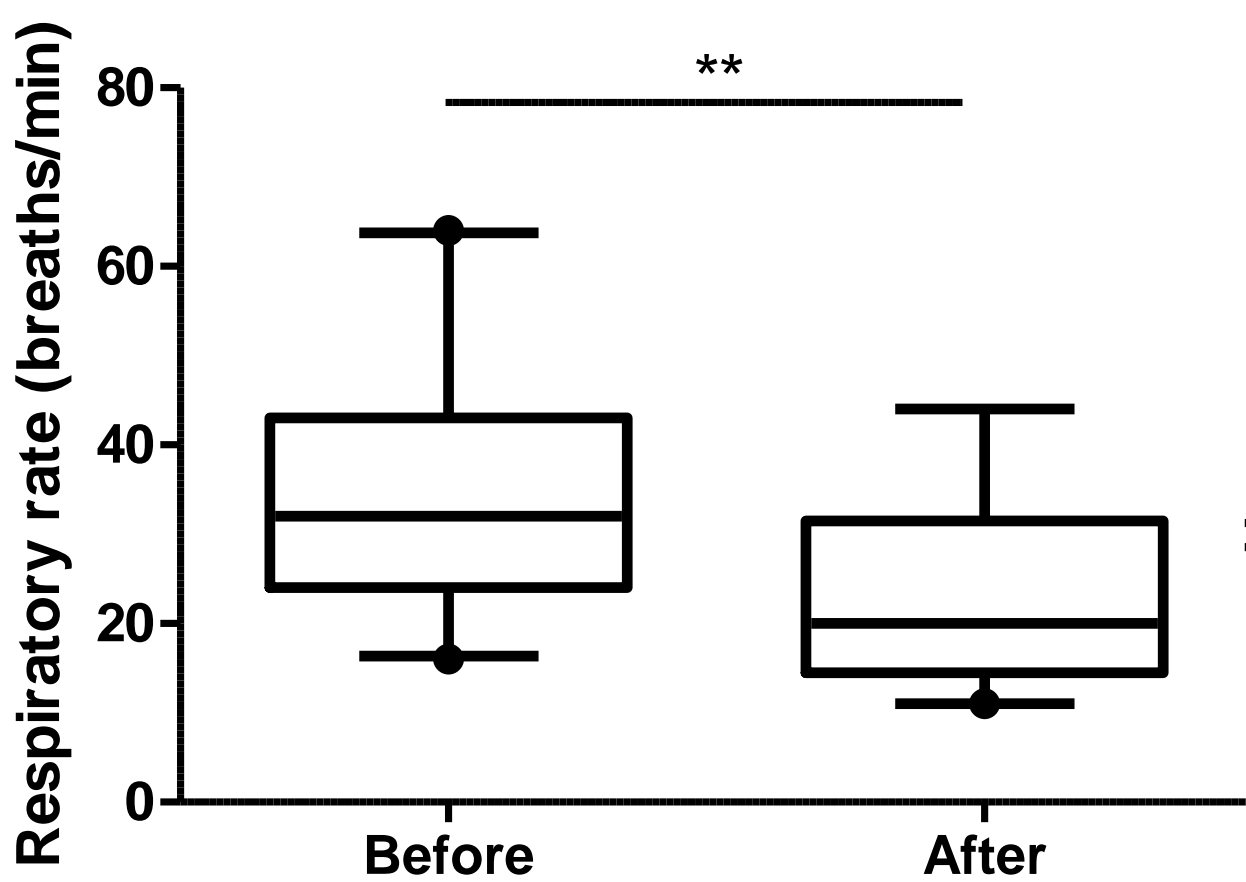


Figure 2. Respiratory rate before and after caecal decompression

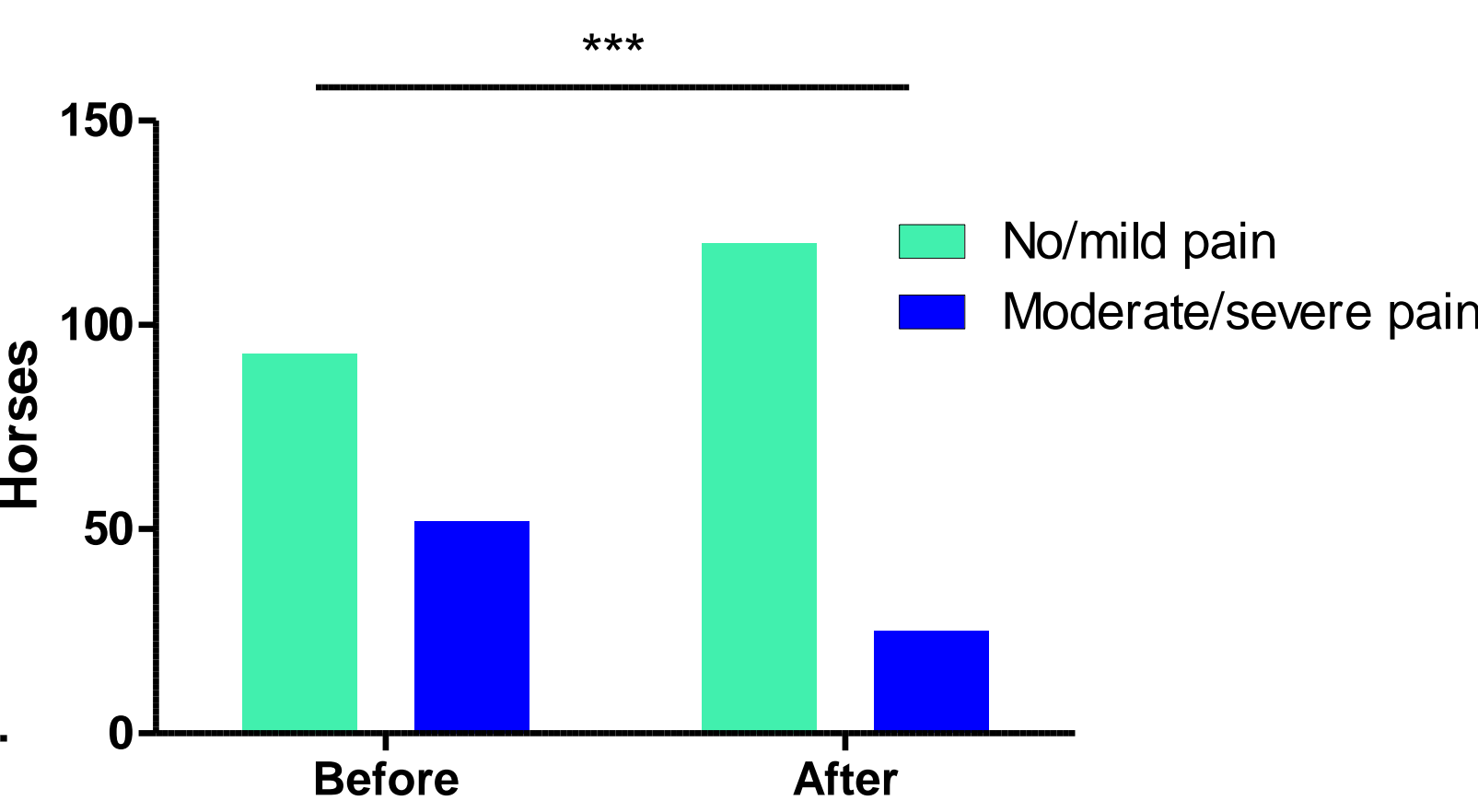


Figure 3. Signs of colic before and after caecal decompression

Table 1. Complications observed after caecal decompression.

	Horses (number,%)
Colic horses (total)	1422
Caecal decomp.	145 (10.2%)
Complications (any)	23 (15.9%)
Type of complications:	
Fever	14 (9.7%)
Diarrhea	13 (9.0%)
Peritonitis	8 (5.5%)
Local inflammation	6 (4.1%)
Haematoma	3 (2.1%)
Abscess	1 (0.7%)
Death	0 (0%)

Methods

- Retrospective review of clinical records (January 2006 - December 2012), at the Large Animal Teaching Hospital, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Clinical data before and after caecal decompression, complications and short-term survival were retrieved.
- Chi-square and paired t-tests were used to compare clinical variables before and after caecal decompression. $P<0.05$ was considered significant.

Standard procedure for percutaneous caecal decompression at the Large Animal Hospital, University of Copenhagen

- Indication:
 - Steelband sound at auscultation-percussion in the right paralumbar fossa
 - No other intestinal structures are palpated rectally between the abdominal wall and the caecum
- Method:
 - Local infiltration analgesia
 - Standard aseptical preparation
 - Skin incision 5 mm
 - Military trochar directed toward the left elbow of the horse and pushed perpendicular to the skin into the caecum
 - Stylet is removed and gas evacuated
 - Rectal examination can be repeated by an assistant for gentle pressure on caecum
 - While withdrawing the trochar 5 ml of saline or penicillin is flushed through the trochar
 - Skin is closed with staplers
 - The horse is treated with Trimetoprim-Sulfa BID for 3 days



